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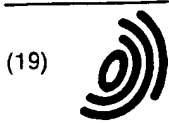
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(11) EP 0 933 657 A2

(12) EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
04.08.1999 Bulletin 1999/31

(51) Int Cl.⁶: G02B 6/293

(21) Application number: 99300147.8

(22) Date of filing: 08.01.1999

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH CY DE DK ES FI FR GB GR IE IT LI LU
MC NL PT SE
Designated Extension States:
AL LT LV MK RO SI

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(30) Priority: 09.01.1998 JP 3532398

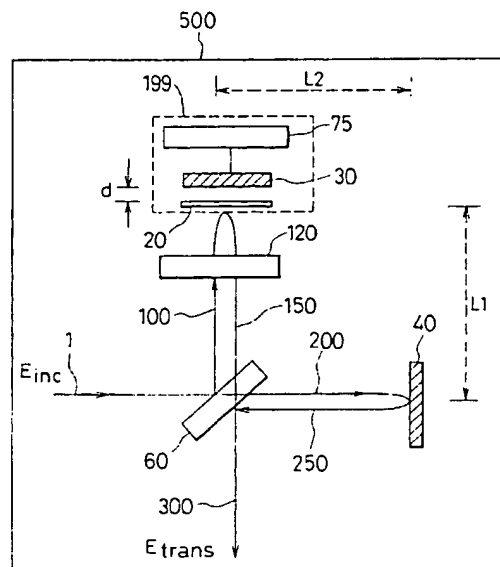
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(54) General multi-function optical filter

(57) A general multi-function optical filter for future smart, high density wavelength division multiplexed (WDM) communication and network system applications using a Michelson-GT interferometer (MGTI) is invented. MGTI filter is a typical Michelson interferometer in which one of its reflecting mirrors is replaced by Gires-Tournois resonator (GTR). One unique feature of this device is that it can function as channel passing, channel dropping and wide bandpass filters depending on the interferometer arm length difference. The output of these functions is available in a single port. Other interesting features of this element are (1) that linewidths of both channel dropping and channel passing filters are twice as narrow compared with typical Fabry-Perot filter having similar parameters, (2) that visibility of the output for three functions is always unity regardless of the mirror reflectance value, and (3) that bandpass filter has an excellent, near-perfect, box-like response function. Numerical results showing these characteristics are presented and other applications are discussed.

FIG. 1



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Description

[0001] This invention relates to a multi-function optical filter intended for multi-wavelength optical communication system and high density wavelength-division multiplexed (WDM) network systems. Besides the optical spectrum region, the invention described herein can also be applied to other electromagnetic spectra such as microwave, milliwave, etc.

[0002] Optical filters are key devices for multi-wavelength optical communication systems and high density wavelength-division multiplexed (WDM) network systems. In order to maximize the present 30-nm communication window supported by an erbium fiber amplifier for WDM network systems, there is an increasing demand for new tunable optical filters that have the following requirements; (1) wide free spectral range (FSR > 30 nm), (2) narrow linewidth ($\Delta\lambda_{FWHM}$ < 0.3 nm), (3) High SNR or unity contrast or visibility, (4) tunable and (5) fiber compatible.

[0003] Furthermore, for next generation, highly complex combination of optical TDM-WDM network systems, an additional requirement, namely (6) programmability or multi-function capability, would be necessary to make a compact, versatile, economical and most importantly intelligence network system. Toward this goal, most if not all key devices in the network system such as an optical filter, an add/drop multiplexer (ADM), etc. need to be programmable, at best, or need to possess multi-function capabilities.

[0004] At present, most optical filters used in optical communication fields are dedicated, single-function devices. These single-function optical filters can be divided into two classes depending on the physical mechanism used in the filtering process namely; (1) grating-based filter and (2) resonant-based filter. Examples of grating-based filters are fiber bragg-grating (FBG) filter [F. Bakhati and P. Sansonetti, "Design and realization of multiple quarter-wave phase shifts UV-written bandpass filters in optical fibers", *J. Lightwave Technol.* vol. 15, 1433-1437, 1997], acousto-opto tunable filter (AOTF) [J. Jackel, J. Baran, A. d'Alessandro, and D. Smith, "A passband-flattened acousto-optic filter", *IEEE Photonics Tech. Letter*, Vol. 7, 318-320, 1995] and array-waveguide grating filter (AWGF) [H. Takahashi, K. Oda, H. Toba, Y. Inoue, "Transmission Characteristics of Arrayed Waveguide N x N Wavelength Multiplexer", *J. Lightwave Technol.* vol. 13, 447-455, 1995]. Examples for resonant-based filters are multilayer dielectric film [P.H. Lissberger and A.K. Roy, "Narrowband position-tuned multilayer interference filter for use in single-mode-fiber systems", *Electr. Lett.* Vol. 21, No. 18, 798-799, 1985], Mach-Zehnder interferometer (MZI) [M. Kuznetsov, "Cascaded Coupler Mach-Zehnder Channel Dropping Filter for Wavelength-Division Multiplexed Optical Systems", *J. Lightwave Technol.* vol. 12, 227-230, 1994], ring resonator [B. E. Little, S. T. Chu, H.A. Haus, J. Foresi, and J.-P. Laine, "Microring resonator Channel Dropping Filters", *J. Lightwave Technol.*, vol. LT-15, pp. 998-1005, 1997], Fox-Smith resonator [P. Urquhart, "Compound optical-fiber-base resonator", *J. Opt. Soc. Amer. A*, vol. 5, pp. 803-812, 1988], and Fabry-Perot resonator [J. Stone and L. Stulz, "Pigtailed high-finesse tunable fiber Fabry-Perot interferometers with large, medium and small free spectral ranges", *Elect. Lett.* Vol. 23, 781-782, 1987].

[0005] From among these different types of optical filters, fiber ring resonator (RR) and fiber Fabry-Perot resonator (FPR) have the highest potential to realize the above first 5 requirements in a compact and stable configuration. Unfortunately, these filters lack programmability or multi-function capability. Optical filters with some programmability in principle like a cascaded optical fiber lattice are impractical to implement because of the numerous phases and coupling parameters that need to be controlled.

[0006] This invention presents a new multi-function optical filter that can function as a channel passing (CP) filter, a channel dropping (CD) filter and a bandpass (BP) filter depending on the interferometer arm length difference ΔL or ratio $\gamma = \Delta L/d$ and reflectance R . CP filter accesses one channel of WDM signal and leave other channels undisturbed while CD filter performs the reverse functions. BP filter, on the other hand, allows only certain specified band of the spectrum to be transmitted while blocking other spectrum bands. Unlike other optical filters, the transmitted intensity outputs for all these three different functions are accessible in a single port. The first 5 requirements mentioned before can also be realized with this invention together with the multi-function capability.

[0007] Other unique features of this invention are (1) narrow linewidths for both MGTI-based CP and CD filters compared with a typical FPR having similar parameters, (2) unity contrast for all three functions and (3) excellent, near-perfect box-like response function for a BP filter.

[0008] This invention provides a general multi-function optical filter characterised in that one of the reflecting mirrors of any two beam interferometer such as Michelson interferometer or Tynman-Green interferometer is replaced by a Gires-Tournois resonator (GTR) with resonator spacing d , that depends on the interferometer arm length difference ΔL or γ (ratio of $\Delta L/d$) and reflectance R . This invention also provided a general multi-function optical filter characterised in that one of the arms of any two-beam interferometer such as Mach-Zehnder interferometer contains ring resonator with an effective resonator perimeter length $p=2d$, that depends on the interferometer arm length difference ΔL or γ (ratio of $\Delta L/d$) and a coupling constant of the ring resonator.

[0009] The multi-function optical filter is tunable by making the resonator spacing d variable by using a PZT as base stage for one of the mirror of the resonator, or using either liquid crystal, thermo-optical, electro-optical, and light-sensitive material as element inside the resonator, or using a micromachined fabrication of the resonator.

[0010] The multi-function optical filter is made or implemented using fiber, waveguide or bulk optics configurations.

[0011] The multi-function optical filter function as an optical Channel Passing (CP) filter when ratio γ is equal to $n\lambda_0/2d$, wherein n stands for an integer including 0.

[0012] The multi-function optical filter also function as optical Channel Dropping (CD) filter for some wavelength range $\Delta\lambda$ when ratio γ is equal to $(2n+1)\lambda_0/4d$ wherein n stands for an integer and λ_0 for an arbitrary fixed center wavelength of the light source.

[0013] The multi-function optical filter also function as Bandpass filter when ratio γ is equal to or approximately to equal to 0.5.

[0014] Further features of the invention, its nature and various advantages will be more apparent from the accompanying drawings in which:-

Figure 1 is a schematic view illustrating the proposed new multi-function optical filter using a Michelson interferometer in which one of the reflecting mirror is replaced by Gires-Tournois resonator (GTR) with cavity spacing d .

Figure 2 is a schematic view illustrating the proposed new multi-function optical filter using a Mach-Zender interferometer in which one of the arm of the interferometer has a ring resonator having resonator length d .

Figure 3 is a schematic view illustrating a GT resonator with spacing d , onto which an incident beam E_{inc} is incident onto the resonator, and the reflected output beam E_{ref} has the same amplitude as E_{inc} but whose phase is modified depending on the front surface reflectivity $R = \rho^2$ and spacing d .

Figure 4 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the reflected phase from GT resonator as a function of the normalized frequency (d_0/λ_0) for different values of reflectivity R .

Figure 5 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI filter when it functions as CP filter for three values of $\rho = 0.1, 0.5$ and 0.9 , and the contrast is always one regardless of the value of ρ (FSR = 30.8 nm, $d = 25\lambda_c$, $\lambda_c = 1.540$ mm).

Figure 6 is a diagram of the transmitted intensity showing narrower linewidth of MGTI filter compared with FPR filter having the same parameter value (a), the numerical ratio between the linewidth of MGTI and FP filters as function of ρ for same resonator spacing d is depicted in (b), and the MGTI linewidth is, at least, twice as narrow compared with FPR filter for $\rho > 0.8$.

Figure 7 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI filter when it functions as CD filter for three values of $\rho = 0.1, 0.5$ and 0.9 , and the linewidth and contrast of MGTI-based CP filter are the same with MGTI-based CP filter except that transmitted output shape is reversed. (FSR = 30.8 nm, $d = 25\lambda_c$, $\lambda_c = 1.540$ mm, $n = \text{integer}$).

Figure 8 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI filter when it functions as CD filter for two values of 0.5 and 0.9 across many FSR ranges, and the shape transmitted output begins to be noticeably distorted at 8 FSRs away from the center. (FSR = 30.8 nm, $d = 25\lambda_c$, $\lambda_c = 1.540$ mm, $n = \text{integer}$).

Figure 9 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the superposition of transmitted intensity of MGTI-based CD for 3 different FSR ranges ($q = q_0, q_0 + 8 \text{ FSR}, q_0 + 16 \text{ FSR}$).

Figure 10 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI filter when it functions as BP filter for four values of $\rho = 0.01, 0.1, 0.3$ and 0.6 , and the output has nearly perfect box-like response with linewidth equal to FSR when the $\rho = 0.3$.

Figure 11 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI-based CP when the resonator spacing d is scanned for four different values ($d = d_0 + .1\lambda, d_0 + .18\lambda, d_0 + .25\lambda, d_0 + .32\lambda$).

Figure 12 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI-based CD when the resonator spacing d is scanned for four different values ($d = d_0 + .1\lambda, d_0 + .18\lambda, d_0 + .25\lambda, d_0 + .32\lambda$).

Figure 13 is a diagram of the calculated result showing the transmitted intensity of MGTI-based BP when the resonator spacing d is scanned for three different values ($d = d_0 + .18\lambda, d_0 + .25\lambda, d_0 + .32\lambda$).

Figure 14(a) is a schematic diagram of a 4-port MGTI filter 500 having an input port 510, output port 520 and two control ports 530 and 540 to control ΔL and d respectively.

Figure 14(b) is a schematic diagram of a 6-port Mach-Zehnder interferometer - based MGTI filter 550 having input ports (510, 511), output ports (520, 521), and two control ports 530 and 540 to control ΔL and d respectively.

Figure 15 is a schematic diagram of an Add/Drop Multiplexer implementation using MGTI filter 500 and two optical circulators 600 and 700.

Figure 16 is a schematic diagram of an another implementation of Add/Drop Multiplexer implementation using MGTI filter 500, one optical circulator 600 and a directional coupler 700.

Figure 17 is a schematic diagram of an implementation of a wavelength router or grating using an array of MGTI-based CP filter with different d , together with a N-port optical circulator, and

Figure 18 is a schematic diagram of a cascaded MGTI filter using two GTRs with two different spacings d_1 .

[0015] The invention consists of a typical Michelson interferometer in which one of its reflecting minor is replaced by

a Gires-Tournois resonator (GTR) **199** (depicted in dashed box) as shown Figure 1. This element is hereafter referred to as Michelson-GT Interferometer (MGTI) filter **500**. Another implementation of the basic idea consists of a Mach-Zehnder interferometer whose one arm contains a ring resonator with an effective resonator length d , as shown in Figure 2.

[0016] Here, the property of GTR will first briefly be outlined before discussing the characteristics of MGTI filter **500**. A GTR **199** [F. Gires and P. Tournois, C.R. Acad. Sci. **258** (5), 612 (1964) and A. Yariv and P. Yeh, *Optical Waves in Crystal* (Wiley, New York, 1990) p. 219] is basically a lossless asymmetric Fabry-Perot resonator with partially reflecting mirror **20** and 1.00% reflecting back mirror **30** as shown in Figure 3. Assuming a lossless system, beam **100** incident onto GTR **199** will be transformed into reflected beam **150** whose amplitude is the same as that of beam **100** but whose phase is different. The complex reflection coefficient and the reflected phase shift Θ of beam **150** due to GTR **199** can be derived as

$$\beta e^{i\Theta} = \frac{E_{ref}}{E_{inc}} = \frac{\sqrt{R} e^{-i2\theta}}{1 + \sqrt{R} e^{-i2\theta}} \quad (1)$$

$$\Theta(R, d) = -2 \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{1 - \sqrt{R}}{1 + \sqrt{R}} \tan(kd) \right) \quad (2)$$

where β ($=1$) stands for amplitude reflection coefficient, R ($=p^2$) for power reflectance of mirror **20**, $\theta = 2\pi\eta d/\lambda = k\eta d$, d for resonator length, λ for wavelength, and η for refractive index ($=1$ for simplicity) of the material inside the resonator. The regenerative interference between the reflected waves coming from mirror **20** and mirror **30** of the resonator is the physical mechanism behind the periodic phase-versus-normalized frequency characteristic of GTR **199**. The actual shape of phase-versus-normalized frequency curve is determined by the actual value of reflectance p as shown in Figure 4.

[0017] As shown in Figure 1, light beam **1** incident onto the MGTI filter **500** is split into two beams **100** and **200** by beamsplitter (BS) **60**. Beam **100** propagates through arm L1 and path-difference modulator **120** while beam **200** propagates through arm L2 of the interferometer. Then, both beams **100** and **200** are reflected back by mirror **40** and GTR **199** as beams **150** and **250**, respectively, and then travel toward BS **60** before they are coherently added at BS **60** as output transmitted electric field E_{trans} **300**. The path-difference modulator **120** is any device that provide and control the total path-difference ($\Delta L = L1 - L2$) of beam **300** and can be placed in either arms of the interferometer.

[0018] The normalized transmitted output complex electric field E_{trans} **300** and intensity I_{trans} are given by

$$\frac{E_{trans}}{E_{inc}} = -i \sin \left[\frac{2k \Delta L - \Theta(R, d)}{2} \right] \exp \left[-i \frac{2k(L_1 + L_2) + \Theta(R, d)}{2} \right] \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{I_{trans}}{I_{inc}} = \sin^2 \left[\frac{2k \Delta L - \Theta(R, d)}{2} \right] \quad (4)$$

where $\Theta(R, d)$ is the reflected phase from GTR **199**, $\gamma = \Delta L/d$ is the ratio between interferometer arm length difference ($\Delta L = L1 - L2$) and GTR spacing d , E_{inc} and I_{inc} are complex incident electric field and intensity, respectively. In this derivation the whole system is assumed to be lossless and the R:T ratio of BS **60** is 50:50.

[0019] As mentioned before, this new element has an inherent capability to function either as CP filter, CD filter and BP filter depending on the value of γ (or ΔL) and reflectance R . These optical functions will be briefly discussed by dividing them into three sections namely: $\gamma = n\lambda_0/2d$ [or $\Delta L = n\lambda_0/2$], $\gamma = (2n+1)\lambda_0/4d$ [or $\Delta L = (2n+1)\lambda_0/4$], and $\gamma = 0.5$ [or $\Delta L = 0.5d$] with n being an integer.

[0020] First, MGTI filter **500** will function as a channel passing filter when γ is 0 or $\Delta L = 0$ where $n = 0$. The calculated normalized transmitted intensity as a function of normalized frequency ($\nu = d/\lambda$) for different values of complex amplitude reflectance p is shown in Figure 5. The frequency response of the filter is periodic with the normalized frequency ($\nu = d/\lambda$). The 30.8-nm-FSR is obtained if we assumed the center wavelength λ_0 of the light source, GT resonator length d , and refractive index η are given by 1.540 μm , $25\lambda_0$ and 1 (for simplicity), respectively. When $\gamma \neq 0$ but ΔL is a multiple of $\lambda_0/2$ ($n \neq 0$), MGTI will still function as CP filter for specified frequency range $\Delta\nu_1$ in which the term $k\Delta L = \pi n(\Delta\nu_1 + \nu_0)$

λ_0 in (3) will still nearly equal πn with $v_0 = d/\lambda_0$ being a fixed center frequency.

[0021] There are two superior features of this filter compared with conventional FPR having similar parameters. The first important feature of MGTI-based CP filter (dashed line) is its narrow linewidth compared with FPR (solid line) as shown in Figure 6(a). The numerical ratio S of the linewidth (at FWHM) between the MGTI filter **500** and FPR filter for same spacing d can be derived as

$$S = \frac{\Delta v_{\text{MGTI}}}{\Delta v_{\text{FPR}}} = 2 \left[\frac{\rho}{1 - \rho^2} \right] \tan^{-1} \left[\frac{1 - \rho}{1 + \rho} \right] \quad (5)$$

and shown in Figure 6(b). Here, a simplified expression for FPR's linewidth Δv_{FPR} is used which is valid only for the case when $(1 - \rho^2) \ll 1$. In the limit the value of ρ approaches unity, the linewidth of the transmitted intensity of MGTI filter **500** can be seen to be, at least, twice as narrow compared with FPR's linewidth. For the case when $\rho^2 \ll 1$, the value of the ratio S becomes much smaller. This narrower linewidth provides a significant advantage since it automatically doubles the Finesse (F) of MGTI filter **500** without any cascading effort.

[0022] The second interesting feature of this CP filter is its contrast or visibility C defined here as $C = [(I_{\text{max}} - I_{\text{min}}) / (I_{\text{max}} + I_{\text{min}})]$, where I_{max} and I_{min} are maximum and minimum transmitted intensities, respectively. The contrast of the peak output intensity of MGTI filter **500** is always unity regardless of the value of reflectance ρ provided that beamsplitter BS **60** has an equal splitting ratio (50:50 T:R). The above feature is absent in a typical FPR filter since its contrast is reflectance-dependent as seen in Figure 6(a). Thus it is expected that the signal-to-noise (SNR) of the transmitted intensity coming from MGTI filter **500** is far better than the FPR filter especially when ρ is within the range (0.1~0.8).

[0023] Second, MGTI filter **500** will function as a CD filter for a certain normalized frequency range $\Delta v = (v'_1 < d/\lambda_0 < v'_2)$ when $\gamma = (2n+1)\lambda_0/4d$ [or $\Delta L = (2n+1)\lambda_0/4$] with n being an integer and λ_0/d being a fixed center normalized frequency. At this normalized frequency range Δv , the term kdy in (4) will nearly equal $\pi/2$ so that the output intensity is transformed from Sine into Cosine function. Just like the case of a CP filter, a 30.8-nm-FSR filter can be obtained if $\gamma = 0.01$ with the parameters $d = 25\lambda_0$, $n = 0$, and $\lambda_0 = \lambda_c = 1.540 \mu\text{m}$. The calculated transmitted intensity as a function of normalized frequency with $\gamma = 0.01$ for different values of reflectance ρ is shown in Figure 7. The linewidth and contrast are the same as in the case of MGTI-based CP filter and superior compared with FPR filter.

[0024] Compared with **5**, the intensity output is just the inverse of the output of a CP filter although there is a small asymmetry in the frequency response as the frequency departs from d/λ_0 . Since the transmitted intensity response of CD is not periodic for all normalized frequency range, the effective normalized frequency range Δv of MGTI-based CD filter is determined by γ . For $\gamma = 0.01$ with a FSR equal to 30.8 nm and $\lambda_c = 1.540 \mu\text{m}$, the effective wavelength range $\Delta\lambda$ where MGTI filter still function as channel dropping is 8 times the FSR or nearly 240 nm as shown in Figure 8. A normalized frequency detuned from the center frequency (d/λ_0) by about 8 FSR does not show any abrupt distortion as compared to a normalized frequency detuned by 16 FSR as shown in Figure 9. A wavelength deviation of about 50 nm from λ_0 will introduce an insignificant 3.2% phase change from $\pi/2$ term and will not pose a problem for channel dropping filter application.

[0025] MGTI filter **500** will function as a bandpass (BP) filter when $\gamma = 0.5$ or $\Delta L = 0.5 d$. The calculated transmitted intensity as a function of the normalized frequency for different values of reflectance ρ is shown in Figure 10. The intensity output has a nearly perfect, box-like response with linewidth equal to FSR when ρ is within 0.15-0.3. Increasing the value of ρ from 0.3 to a higher value enlarges the edge component (sideband or ripple) frequencies while decreasing the value of ρ from 0.15 changes the shape of the transmitted intensity output from a square to a sine-like shape. Compared with other methods of generating a box-like frequency response, the MGTI filter **500** is very simple with superior characteristics. It does not require multiple cascading of filters which makes the device compact and simple.

[0026] When GTR **199** is constructed such that the resonator spacing d can be made variable, the MGTI filter will also have tunability characteristic. There are various ways to realize this goal such as the use of (1) PZT as the base stage of one of the mirror in the resonator, (2) electro-optical or thermo-optical or light -sensitive materials as element inside the resonator, (3) microchannel fabrication of the resonator, etc. Tuning speed will depend on the choice of a particular method. These various methods together with corresponding manual or electrical controller are schematically depicted by block **75** in Figure 1. The transmitted intensities for different values of d ($d = d_0, d_0 - 0.1 \lambda_0, d_0 - 0.18 \lambda_0, d_0 - 0.32 d_0$) are shown in Figure 11, Figure 12 and Figure 13 for CD, CP and BP filters respectively, which show good tunable properties.

[0027] Beside the optical function of filtering, the MGTI filter can be combined with other optical elements to produce other optical functions such as an Add/Drop Multiplexer, a wavelength router, etc. For the purpose of brevity, MGTI filter **500** will be depicted as a block box with 4 ports as shown in Figure 14 where **510**, **520**, **530** and **540** stand for an input beam port, an output beam port, a path-difference (ΔL) controller port and a resonator-spacing d controller port, respectively. Additional control port to adjust the reflectance R of mirror $M1$ can be added to the device by using graded

reflectivity mirror M1 together with a sliding technique. Ports 530 and 540 can accept either optical or electrical signals as control signals to change ΔL and d by providing suitable interface devices.

[0028] When MGTI filter 500 is placed in between two three-port optical circulator 600 and 700, switchable, tunable Add/Drop WDM multiplexer can be realized as shown in Figure 15. The first optical circulator 600 has an input port #1 610 and output ports 620 and 630 while the second optical circulator 700 has input ports 710 and 720 and output port 730. As an Add/Drop WDM filter for a single, specified frequency, the MGTI filter is set as channel dropping CD filter with a fixed resonator spacing d_0 . A beam 800 with wavelengths $\lambda_0-\lambda_N$ incident onto port 610 will travel the path 610->620->510->520->710->730. Since MGTI filter 500 is set as a CD filter for λ_5 ; for example, all wavelength ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$ and $\lambda_0-\lambda_N$) except λ_5 will exist at 730 as beam 890 while λ_5 will be reflected back by 500, passes through 510->620 and exists or "drops" at output port 630 as beam 850. A different input beam 870 with wavelength λ_{5N} incident onto port 720 of optical coupler or combiner 700 will be directed to exist at 730 to join or "add" to other wavelengths ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$ and $\lambda_0-\lambda_N$) as beam 890. This dual-function completes the function of an Add/Drop WDM Multiplexer for a single, specified wavelength λ_5 .

[0029] Under the same conditions mentioned above if the MGTI-filter 500 is switched from CD into CP filter by changing ΔL using 530, the whole system will function as an Add/Drop WDM Multiplexer not for a single, specified wavelength λ_5 but for the complementary wavelength band ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$ and $\lambda_0-\lambda_N$). Thus the use of the MGTI-based filter allows an ordinary Add/Drop Multiplexer to have additional functions as a switchable complementary Add/Drop Multiplexer.

[0030] Under the same conditions mentioned above if the MGTI-filter 500 has an additional controller module to vary the effective reflectance R of mirror M1 such that the MGTI filter can be switched from CD into BP filter using appropriate R and ΔL , the whole system will function as Add/Drop WDM filter for specified frequency bands instead of an Add/Drop WDM filter for single frequency λ_5 or its complementary wavelength band ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$ and $\lambda_0-\lambda_N$).

[0031] Another implementation of the Add/Drop Multiplexer using an optical circulator an directional coupler and a MGTI-based CP filter is shown in Figure 16. An incident beam 840 ($\lambda_0-\lambda_N$) is incident onto MGTI-based CP filter through port 610 --> port 620 of an optical circulator 600. Optical beam with wavelength λ_5 is "dropped" or transmitted as beam 860 while beam with wavelengths ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$ and $\lambda_0-\lambda_N$) are reflected. The reflected beam passes through the optical circulator by port 630 before they are incident to the optical coupler or combiner 700 and exist as beam 890. An additional beam λ_{5N} 870 is "added" into the system through port 720 of a coupler to complete the function of the Add/Drop Multiplexer.

[0032] Another implementation of the Add/Drop Multiplexer with no additional component is the Mach-Zehnder interferometer-based MGTI filter shown in Figure 2. In this filter, it is basically the same with Michelson interferometer-based MGTI filter except that Mach-Zehnder-based MGTI filter has two inputs ports and two output ports. As shown in Figure 2, a beam E_{inc} 1 incident onto mirror 60 will be divided into two beams 200 and 100. Beam 200 will travel through the arm, reflected by mirror 41 and incident to mirror 61 as beam 250. On the other hand, beam 100 will propagate through the ring resonator 199 and path-length modulator 120, reflected by mirror 40 before it is incident to mirror 61 to coherently add with beam 250 to obtain the output beam E_{tran} 300 in one port and another output beam E_{tran} 310 in the other port. Beam 310 is the conjugate of beam 300 which means that all wavelengths that are not transmitted as beam 300 will be transmitted as beam 310. Another possible arrangement for incident beam to be injected into Mach-Zehnder interferometer is shown in Figure 2 where beam E'_{inc} is incident onto the other side of mirror 61.

[0033] The ring resonator 199 which comprises an optical coupler 25, any optical medium 26 such as planar waveguide or fiber or free-space to form the ring resonator will function like the GT resonator. The perimeter length $p=2d$ of the ring resonator 199 can be made variable by using liquid crystal, thermo-optical, electro-optical and light sensitive materials as part of the material 27 of the ring resonator. The length d can then be changed by a controller 75. For the purpose of brevity, Mach-Zehnder-based MGTI filter 550 will be depicted as a block box with 6 ports as shown in Figure 14(b) where (510, 511), (520, 521) 530, and 540 stand for input beam ports, output beam ports, a path-difference (ΔL) controller port and a resonator-spacing d controller port, respectively. Additional control port to adjust the coupling constant of ring resonator coupler can be added to the device. Ports 530 and 540 can accept either optical or electrical signals as control signals to change ΔL and d by providing suitable interface devices.

[0034] Mach-Zehnder based MGTI filter functions as Add/Drop Multiplexer when it is set to operate as channel dropping filter for specified wavelength for example λ_5 . An incident beam ($\lambda_0-\lambda_N$) is incident onto Mach-Zehnder based MGTI filter CP filter through port 510 will be spectrally divided into beam ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$, $\lambda_6-\lambda_N$) which exists at output port 520 and beam λ_5 which exists at output port 521. An additional beam λ'_{5N} is "added" into the system through input port 511 to complete the function of the Add/Drop Multiplexer. If the incident beam ($\lambda_0-\lambda_N$) is injected through input port 511, then beam ($\lambda_0-\lambda_4$, $\lambda_6-\lambda_N$) will exist at output port 521 and beam λ_5 which exists at output port 520. Furthermore, Mach-Zehnder based MGTI filter will also function as Add/Drop Multiplexer when it is set to operate as channel passing filter for specified wavelength for example λ_5 . In this case, the output performance of the device is similar to the case when the input beam is injected into port 511 as explained above.

[0035] Beside the function of an Add/Drop Multiplexer, a WDM grating (similar to the function of an Array Waveguide

Grating) or wavelength router 1500 function can also be realized when a series of MGTI-based CP filters 500 with different centered wavelengths λ_N (500, 502, 509, etc. by having different resonator spacing d_N) are combined with a N-port optical circulator 1000 as shown in Figure 17. An input beam 900 with wavelength $(\lambda_1 - \lambda_N)$ will propagate from P1 to P2 of the optical circulator 1000 before it is incident onto MGTI filter 500 which transmit only one specified wavelength λ_1 as optical beam 901 and reflects the rest. The reflected beam will propagate back to circulator 1000 from P2 to P3 before entering MGTI filter 502 which pick up one specified wavelength λ_2 and transmits it as optical beam 902. This process continues up to port N of the optical circulator to form spatially separated N optical beams 901-995. By providing suitable interface devices at port ΔL -and port d-control ports that receive time-dependent signal, the device can selectively, spatially, temporally re-route or redirect any particular wavelength λ_N at any particular port. Other variation of the implementations of wavelength router are also possible.

[0036] It is noted that the above series of MGTI filters are all CP filters. If any one of the above CP filter is switched to a CD filter by their respective port 531 (or 532, etc), the final output beam will be change. If a particular filter (for example) 506 functions as CD filter, all the "above filters" 500-505 will transmit only their respective wavelengths while filter 506 transmits the rest of the wavelength signals. The "below filters 507-509" will transmit no or zerooutput intensities.

[0037] The linewidth (or bandwidth) of MGTI-based CP and BP filters can be further narrowed by cascading two or more CP (BP) filters with similar or different resonator spacing using vernier effect as illustrated in Figure 18 for two MGTI filters (A and B). The purpose of the isolator is to avoid resonating interference between these two filters. On the other hand, the linewidth of MGTI-based CD filter will be broadened instead of being narrowed by cascading process.

[0038] Again it is noted as an important point that the output of these three different filtering functions of the MGTI filter is accessible in a single output port. This important feature together with the multi-function characteristics of the new device offers new design parameters for future smart WDM architecture which could considerably reduce the number of optical components needed in a total system, reduce cost and size, and offer system flexibility.

[0039] As a summary, a new multi-function optical filter is proposed for future smart, highly-density WDM applications. The device can function as a channel dropping (CD) filter, channel passing (CP) filter and bandpass (BP) filter depending on ΔL of the interferometer. Linewidths of both CD and CP filters are twice as narrow compared with a typical FPR filter having similar parameters and their contrasts are always unity. A BP filter has an excellent, near-perfect, box-like response function. Fiber and waveguide implementations of the proposed filter are also possible. Variation using polarization elements and GT resonator is also straightforward.

Claims

1. A general multi-function optical filter characterised in that one of the reflecting mirrors of any two beam interferometer such as Michelson interferometer or Tynman-Green interferometer is replaced by a Gires-Tournois resonator (GTR) with resonator spacing d , that depends on the interferometer arm length difference ΔL or γ (ratio of $\Delta L/d$) and reflectance R .
2. A general multi-function optical filter characterised in that one of the arms of any two-beam interferometer such as Mach-Zehnder interferometer contains ring resonator with an effective resonator perimeter length $p=2d$, that depends on the interferometer arm length difference ΔL or γ (ratio of $\Delta L/d$) and a coupling constant of the ring resonator.
3. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1, characterised in that it is tunable by making the resonator spacing d variable either by using PZT as base stage of one of the mirror in the resonator, or using liquid crystal, thermo-optical, electro-optical and light sensitive materials as element inside the resonator, or using a micromachined fabrication of the resonator.
4. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 2, characterised in that it is tunable by making the ring resonator perimeter length $p=2d$ variable either by using liquid crystal, thermo-optical, electro-optical and light sensitive materials as part or portion of the ring resonator, or using a micromachined fabrication of the resonator.
5. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that it functions as optical Channel Passing filter when ratio γ is equal to $n\lambda_0/2d$, wherein n stands for an integer including 0.
6. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that it functions as optical Channel Dropping filter for some wavelength range $\Delta\lambda$ when ratio γ is equal to $(2n+1)\lambda_0/4d$ with n being an integer and λ_0 an arbitrary

fixed center wavelength of the light source.

7. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that it functions as Bandpass filter when ratio γ is equal to 0.5.
8. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 acting as an optical channel dropping filter, further comprising an optical circulator and an optical coupler or an optical combiner, to function as an add/drop wavelength-division multiplexed filter device for a single, specified frequency.
9. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 2 acting as an optical channel dropping filter functions as an add/drop wavelength-division multiplexed filter device for a single, specified frequency.
10. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 acting as an optical channel passing filter, further comprising an optical circulator and an optical coupler or an optical combiner, to function as an add/drop wavelength-division multiplexed filter device for wide frequency bands.
11. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 2 acting as an optical channel passing filter, functions as an add/drop wavelength-division multiplexed filter device for wide frequency bands.
12. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 acting as an optical bandpass filter, further comprising an optical circulator and an optical coupler or an optical combiner, to function as band selective add/drop wavelength-division multiplexed filter device for wide frequency bands.
13. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 2 acting as an optical bandpass filter, functions as band selective add/drop wavelength-division multiplexed filter device for wide frequency bands.
14. A multi-function filter according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that it is configured to apply to any electromagnetic field region such as X- ray, microwave, milliwave, other besides the main intended optical range region.
15. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 5, characterised in that it is cascaded or vernier-calibrated to narrow further the linewidth of the said channel passing filter.
16. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 6, characterised in that it is cascaded or vernier-calibrated to wider further the linewidth of the said channel dropping filter.
17. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 7, characterised in that it is cascaded or vernier-calibrated to further modify the linewidth of the said bandpass filter.
18. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 or 2 characterised in that it further comprises additional multi-functional filters to constitute an array of filters having a specified increasing spacing d , and an N-port optical circulator, thereby functioning as a grating or wavelength router.
19. A multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that it is configured using fiber, planar waveguide or bulk optics configuration technologies.
20. The multi-function optical filter according to claim 1 or 2, characterised in that it also functions as wavelength dependent optical switch.

FIG. 1

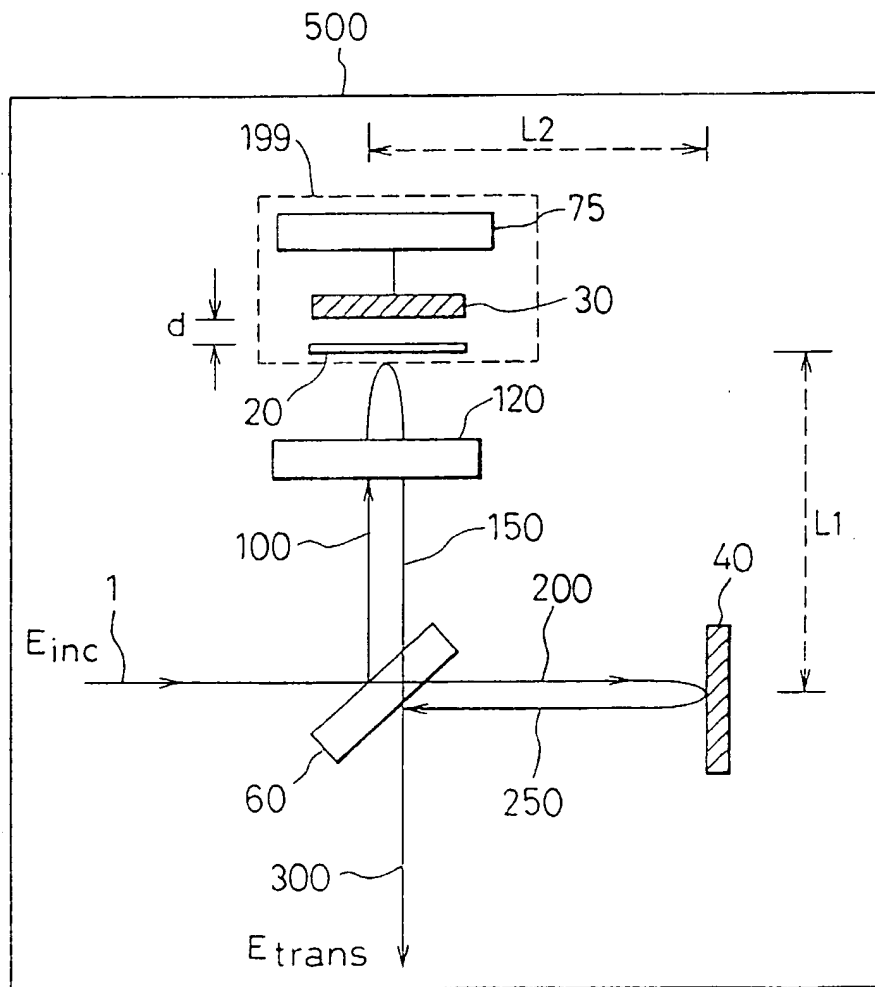


FIG. 2

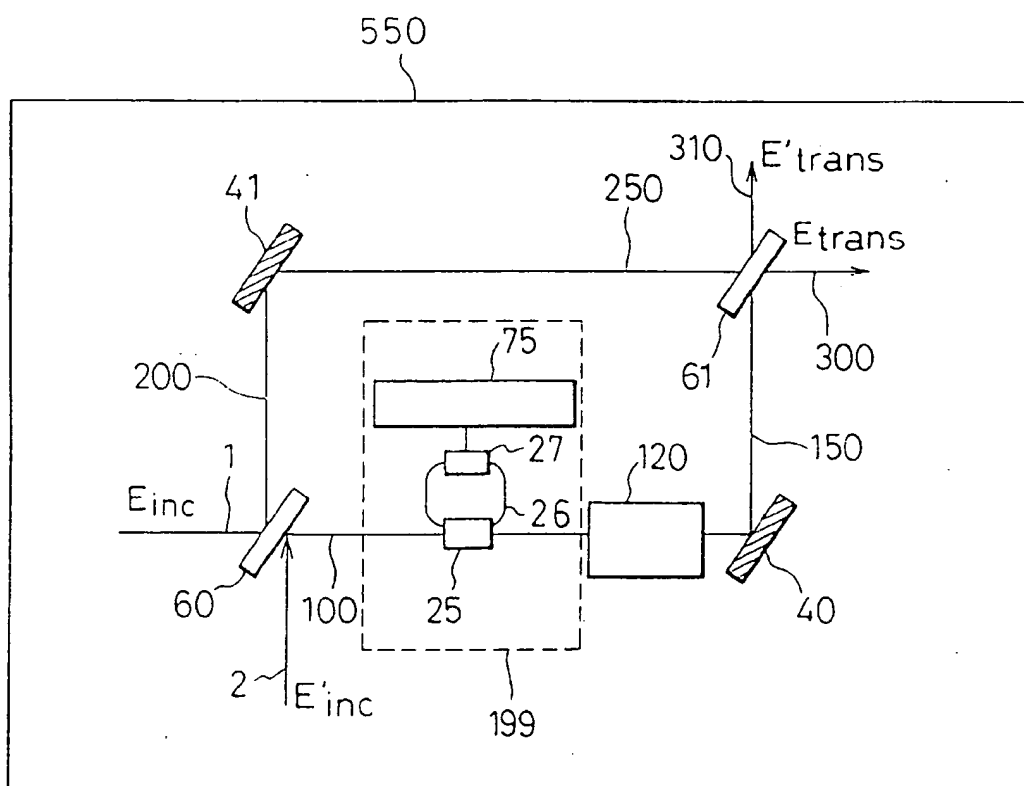


FIG. 3

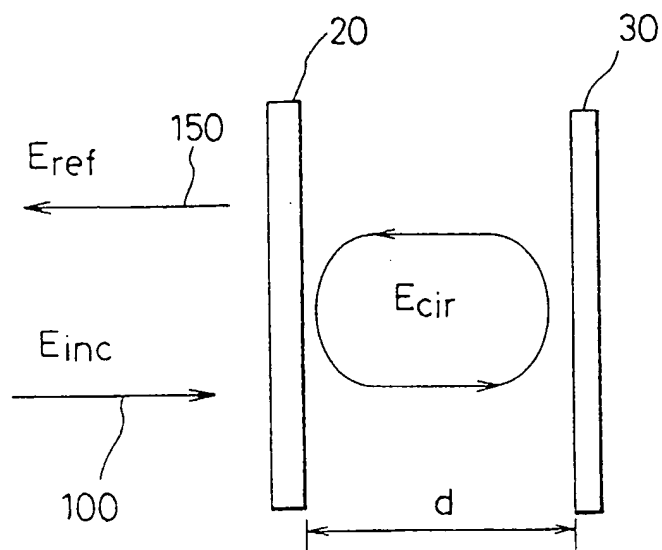


FIG. 4

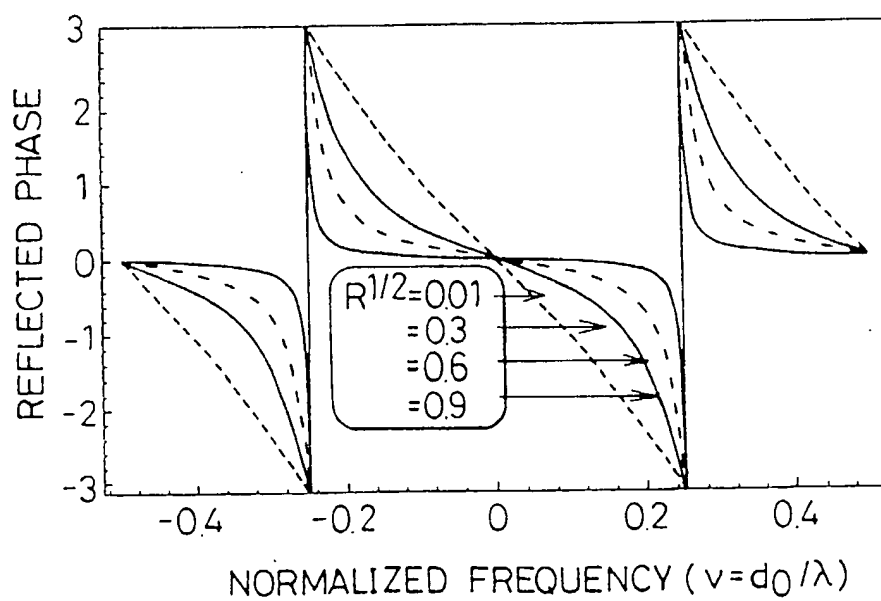


FIG. 5

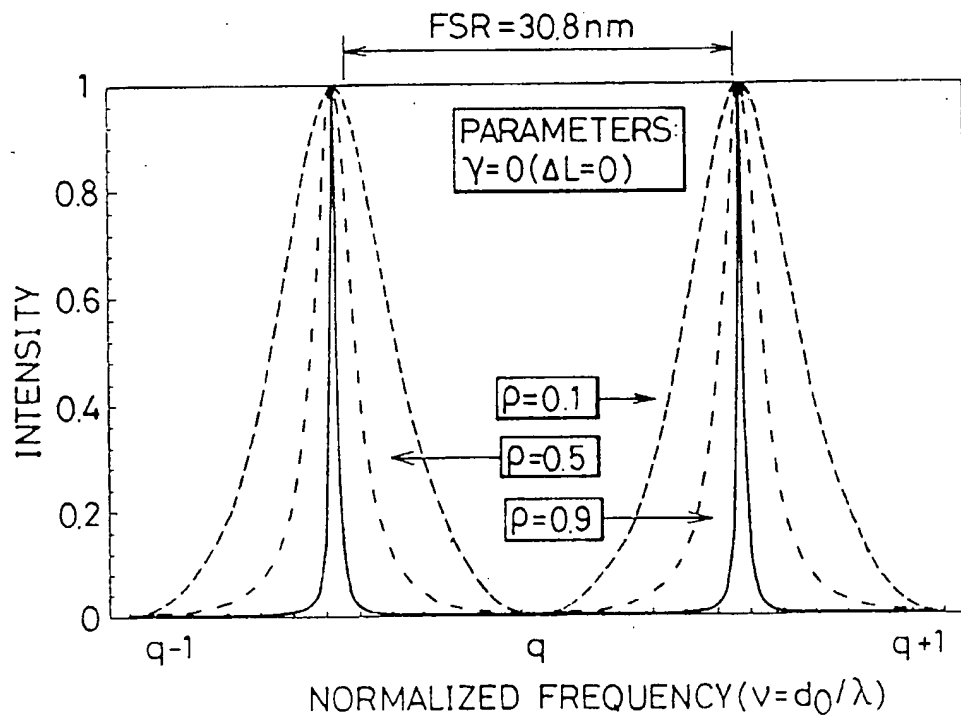


FIG. 6 (a)

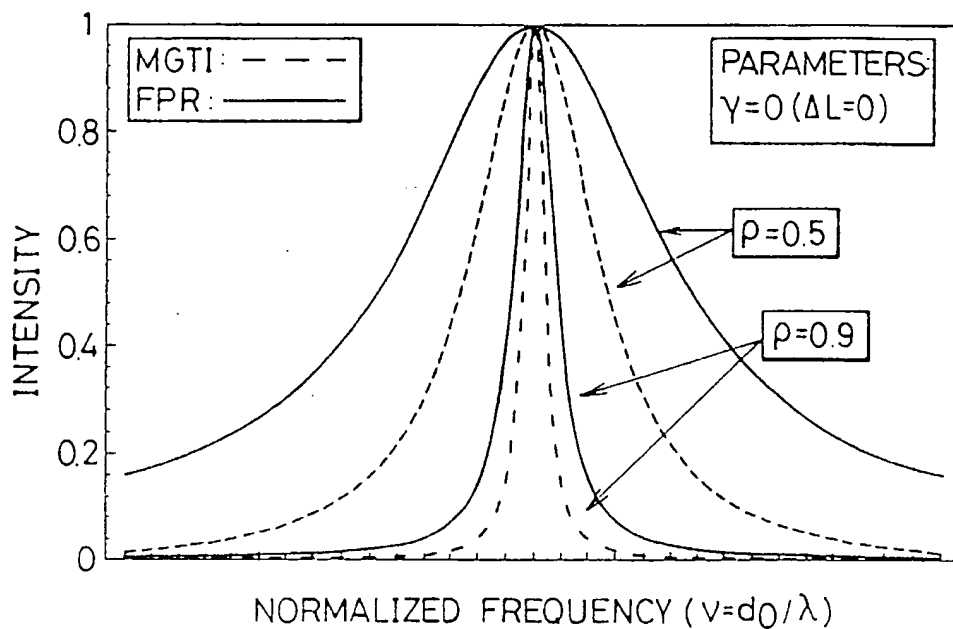


FIG. 6 (b)

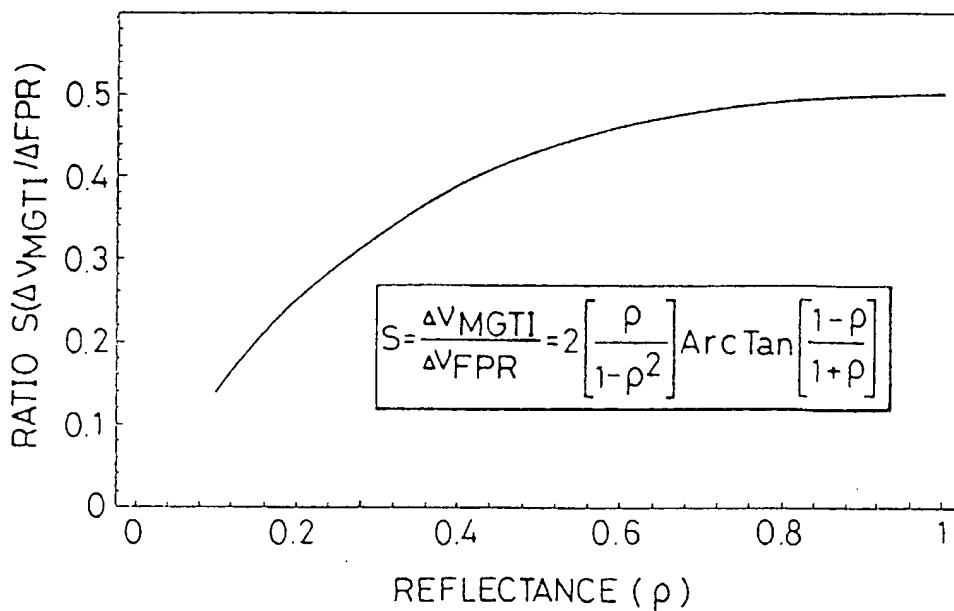


FIG. 7

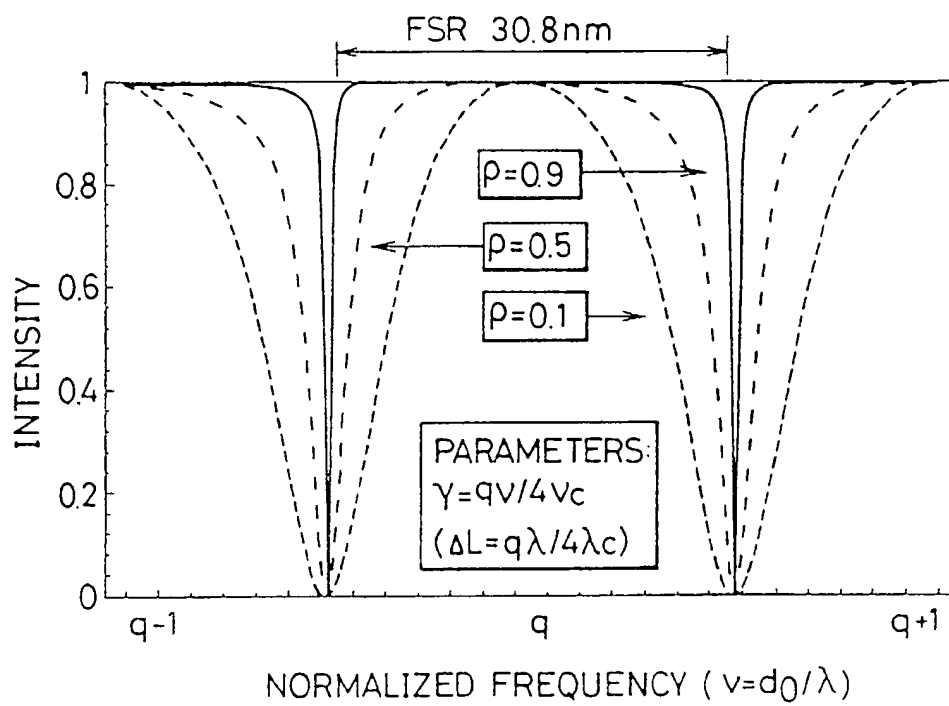


FIG. 8

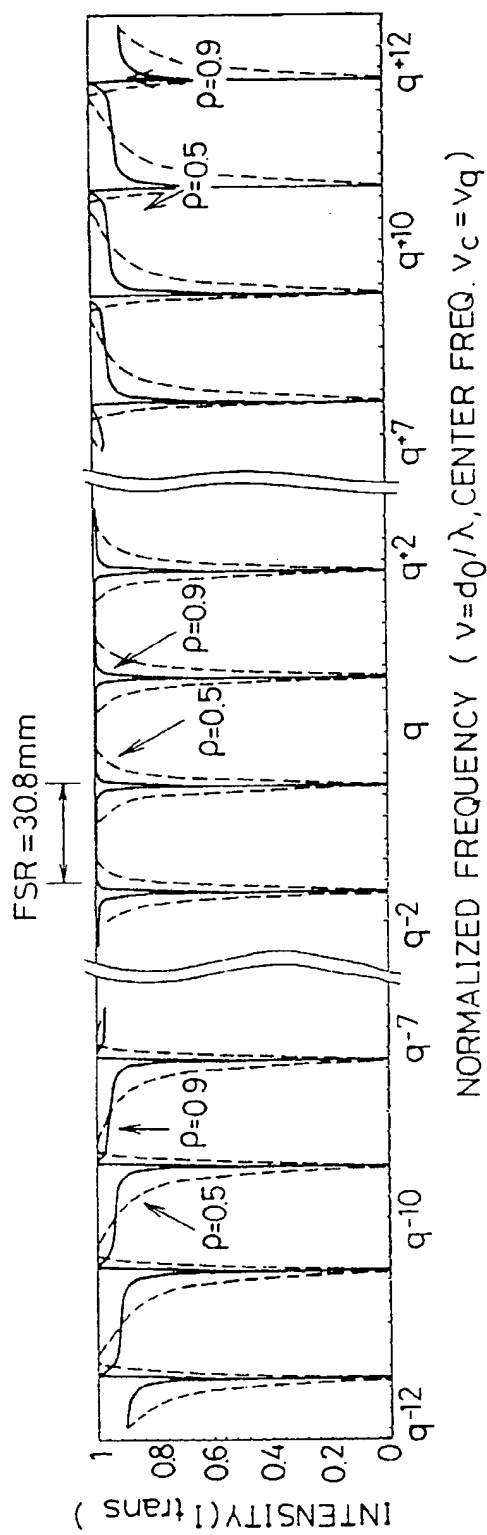


FIG. 9

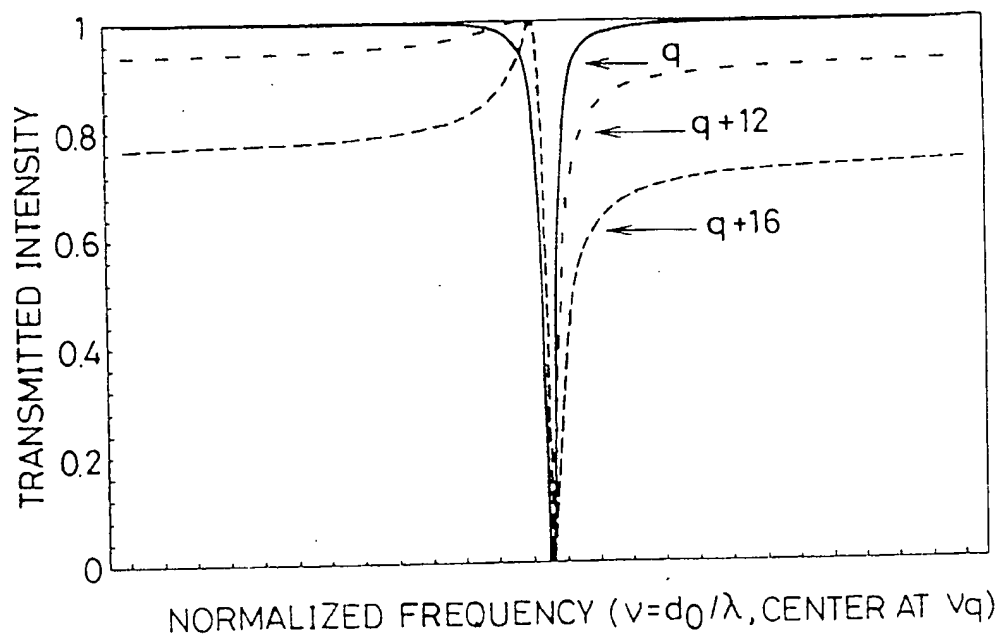


FIG. 10

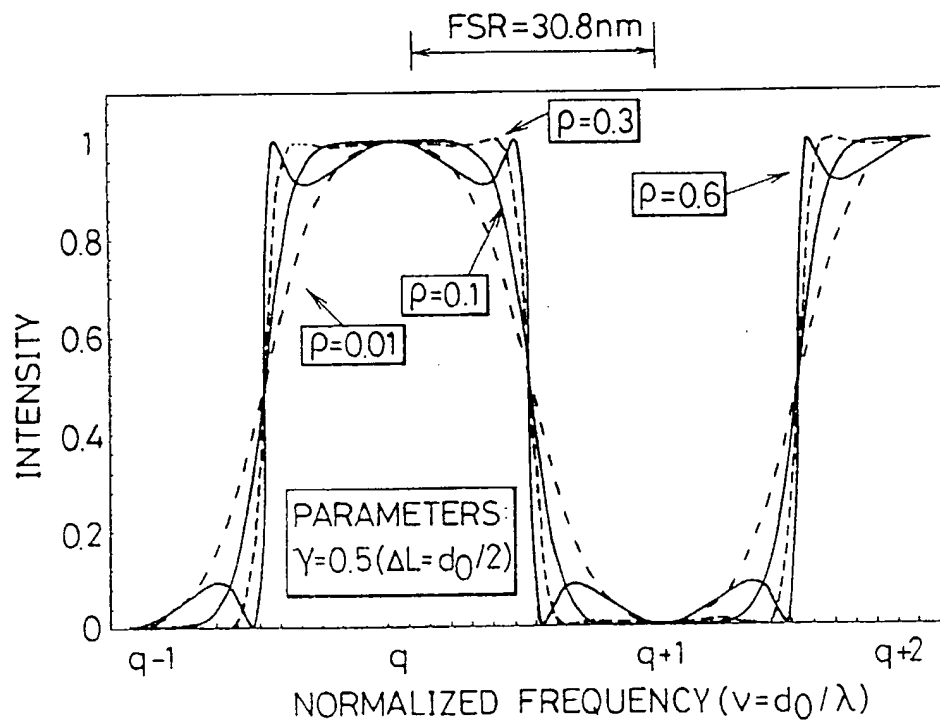


FIG. 11

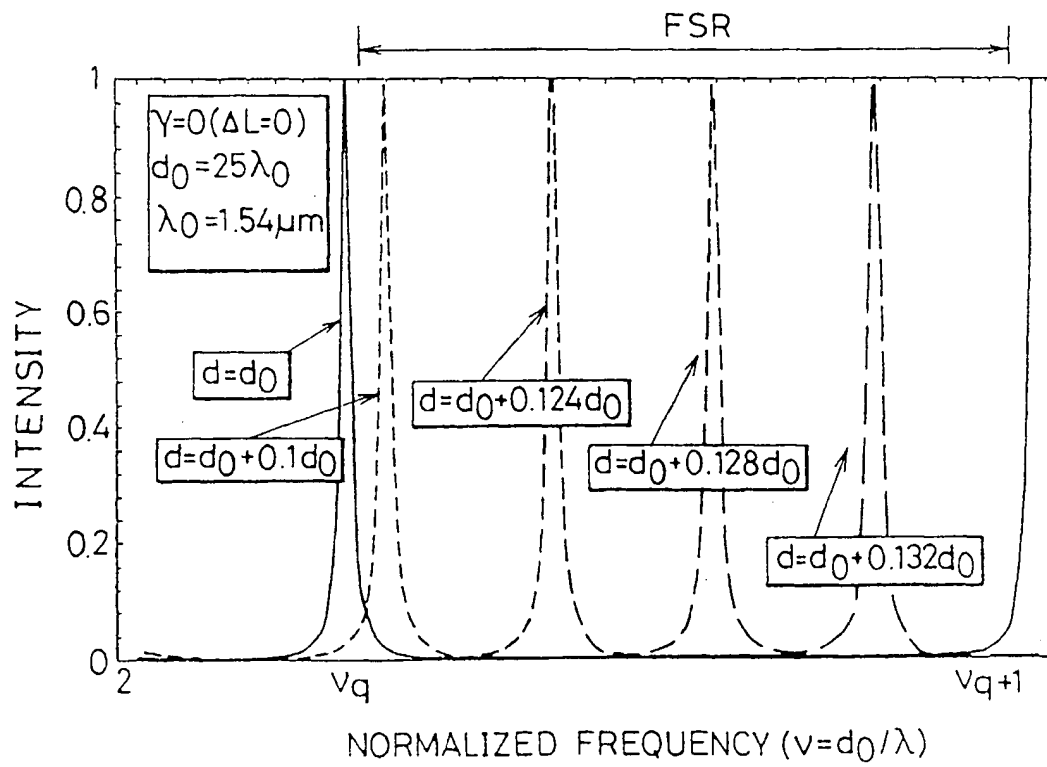


FIG. 12

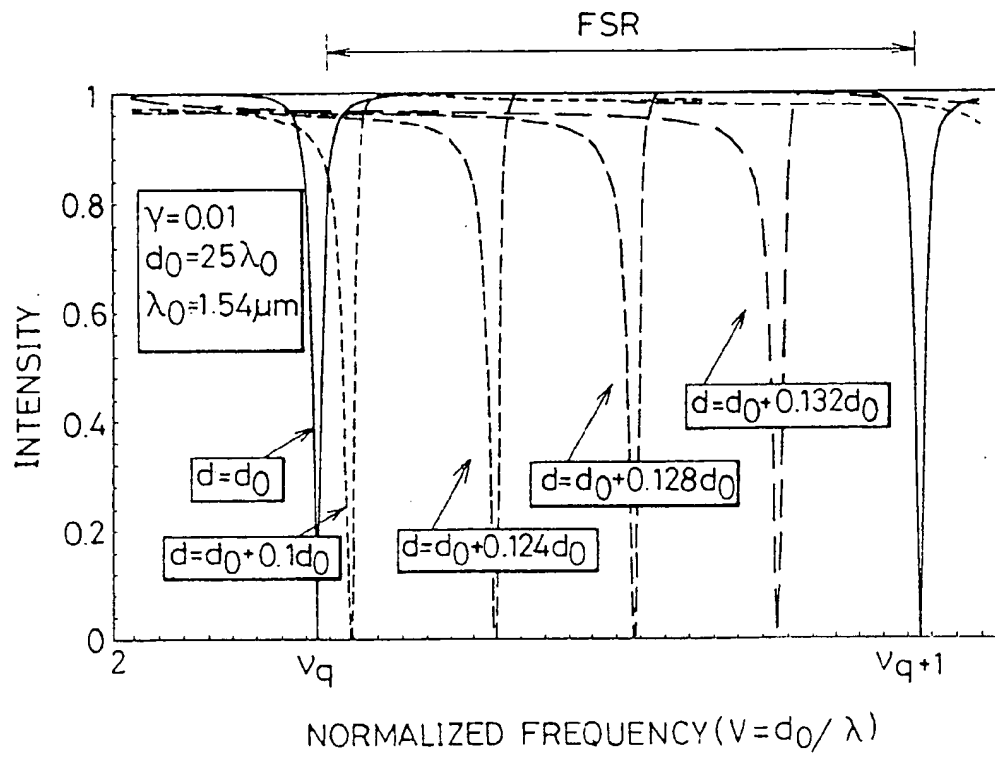


FIG. 13

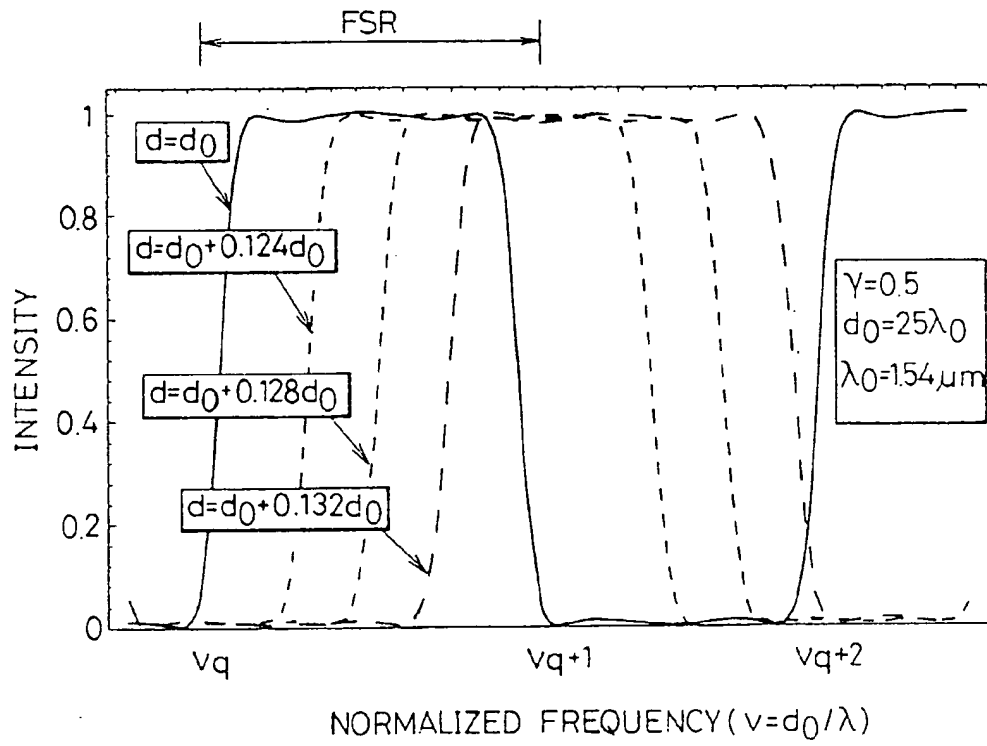


FIG. 14 (a)

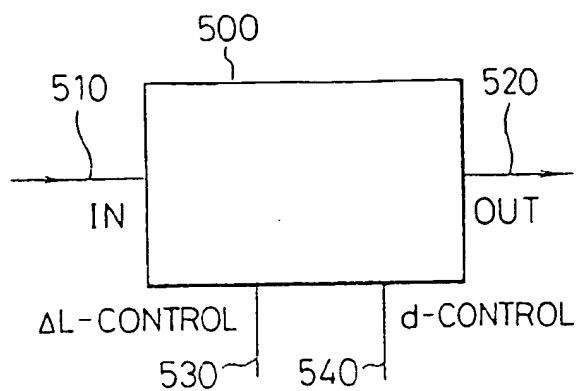


FIG. 14 (b)

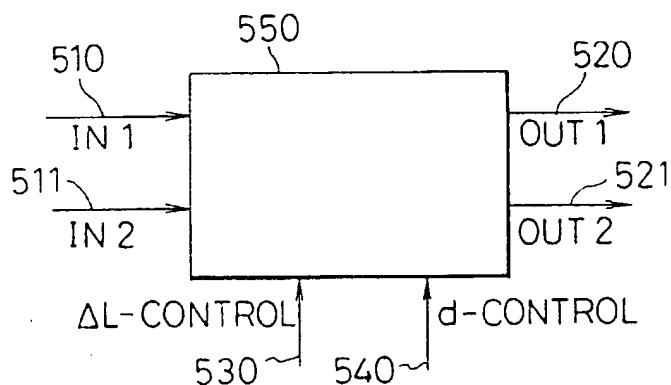


FIG. 15

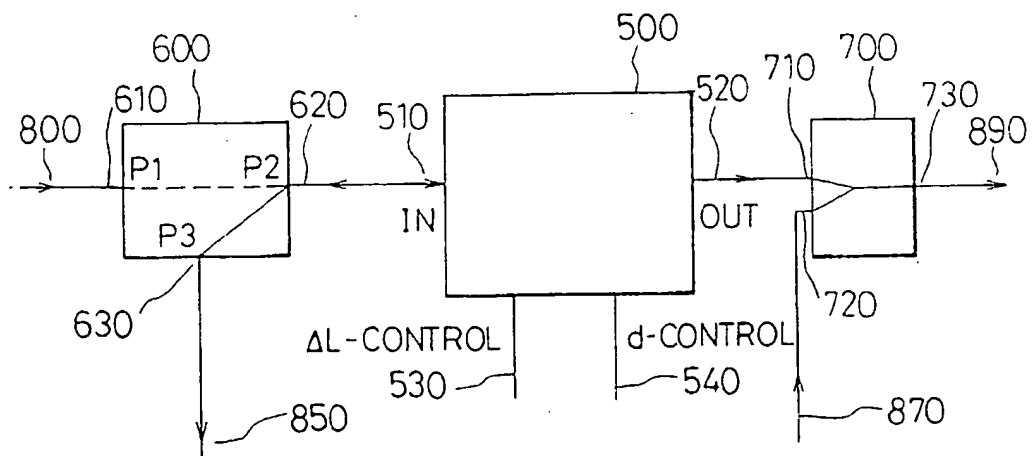


FIG. 16

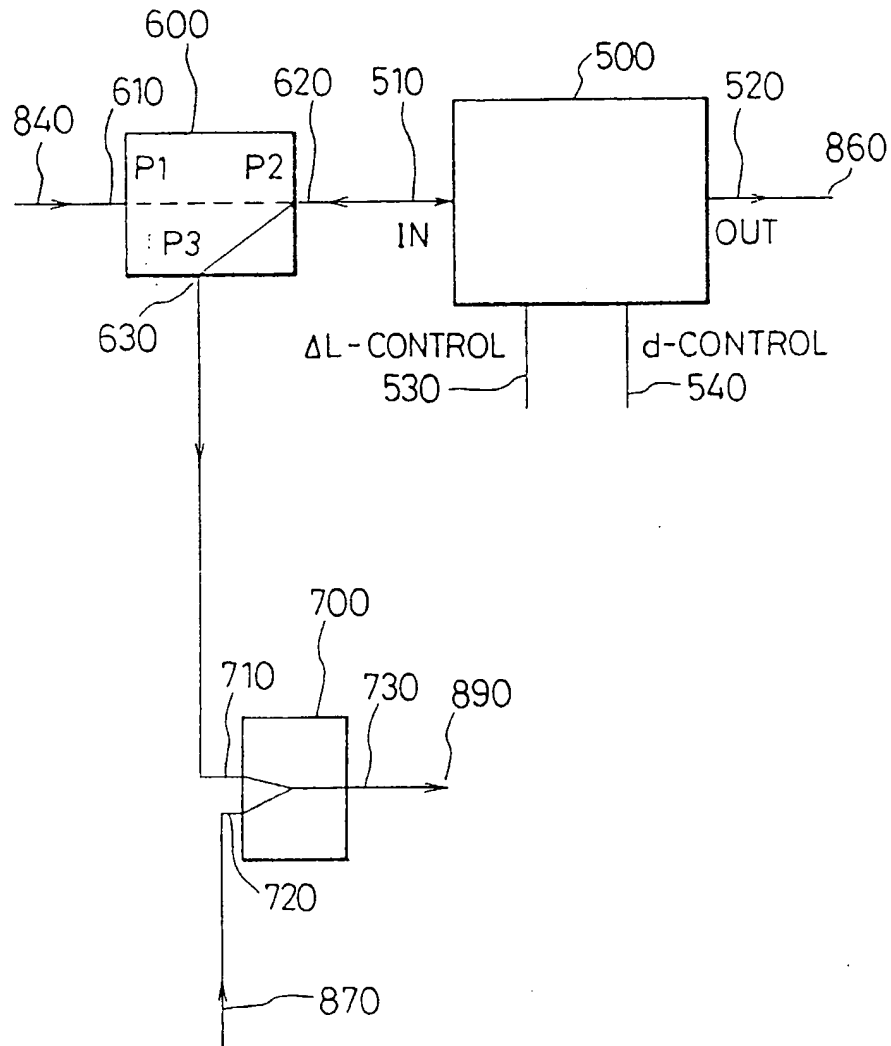


FIG. 17

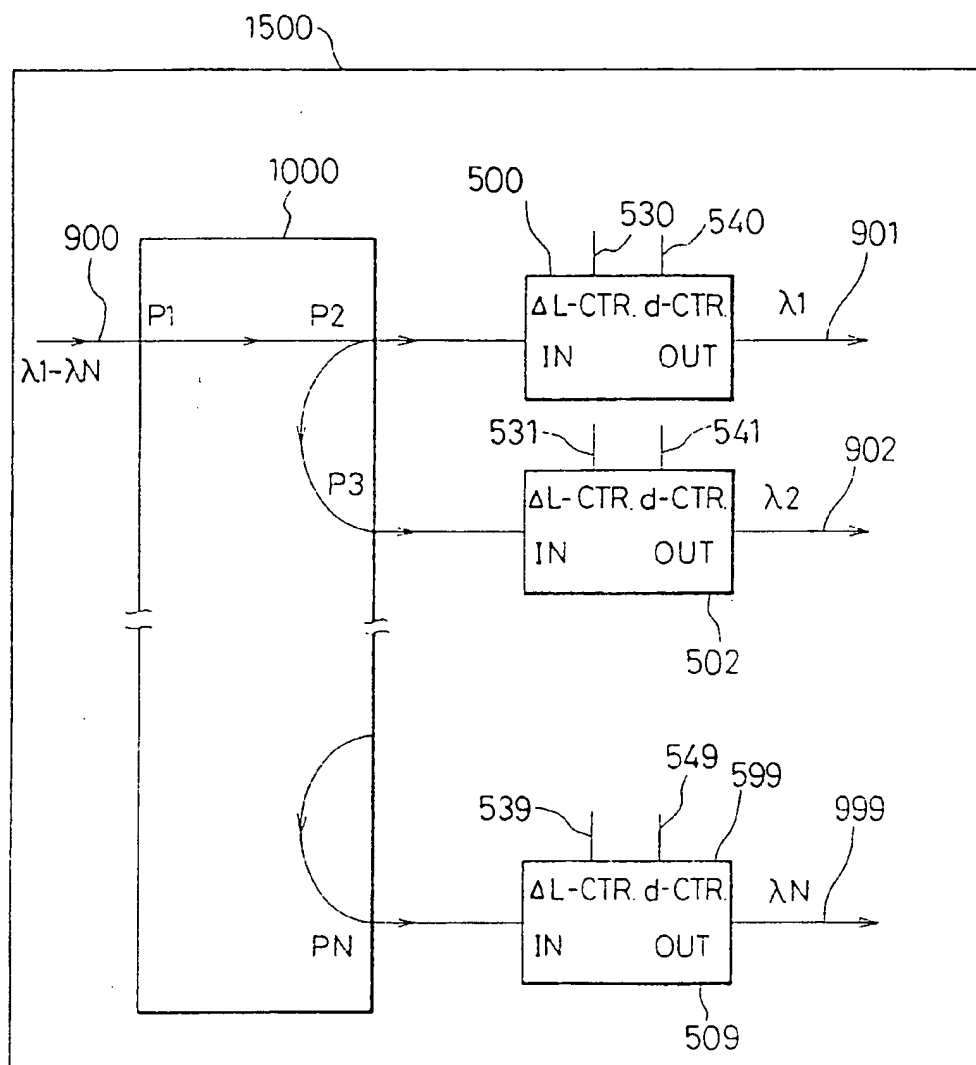


FIG. 18

